CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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LETTER ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT BY THE LEADER OF THE UNITED KINGDOM DELEGATION ON 23 JUNE 1992

I should like to draw your attention to the following announcement made by Mr. Malcolm Rifkind MP, United Kingdom, Secretary of State for Defence, in answer to a Parliamentary Question in the House of Commons on 15 June 1992:

> "The North Atlantic Treaty Organization confirmed last autumn that the sub-strategic nuclear capability remains essential to provide the link between conventional and strategic forces, but that significant reductions in sub-strategic nuclear forces were now possible. In addition to the reductions announced last autumn, the alliance has decided to terminate the deployment of United States nuclear depth bombs on NATO maritime patrol aircraft.
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> "The Government are committed to maintaining the United Kingdom's nuclear arsenal at the minimum level necessary for our deterrent needs. My predecessor announced last September that tactical nuclear weapons would no longer be deployed on Royal Navy ships in normal circumstances. The Government have now decided that this residual capability is no longer needed. Royal Navy ships and aircraft and Royal Air Force maritime patrol aircraft will therefore no longer have the capability to deploy tactical nuclear weapons. The United Kingdom weapons previously earmarked for this role will be destroyed. The United Kingdom's sub-strategic nuclear capability will therefore consist of Royal Air Force dual-capable aircraft with the WE177 free-fall bomb."

I believe the above statement has a direct relevance to the work of the Conference on Disarmament and I should be grateful if you would circulate this letter as an official document of the Conference.

(Signed) Michael Weston
Ambassador